

## One Day

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# One Day

by [janewithwhy](#)

Summary

Who knew it'd be like this?

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

“Yea! I’m wide awake; I’m ready to go. C’mon Ryuko-chan we’re burning daylight and today is our special day!”

To say that Mako Mankanshoku had ever slowed down as she got on in her years would have been a bold faced lie. This truth was evident in the way she pushed aside her comforter and jumped out of bed as spry as ever, as if the twenty years that had passed since her graduation from high school had never occurred. What looked like morning calisthenics was really just working off her excitement at the joy of living and she happily bobbed and weaved her way to the bathroom.

She shoved her toothbrush into her mouth and looked seriously at herself in the mirror, furrowing her brows and making sure she hit every tooth with the bristle.

“Gotta get out of bed, Ryuko,” Mako hollered, her mouth open wide around her toothbrush. She spit into the sink. “There’s too much to do today! No lounging!”

She washed her face then pumped her arms before rubbing vigorously to dry off her cheeks with her hand towel. She did a few more vague athletic gestures—flexing and grinning in the mirror, squatting and reassuring herself that she was as limber as twenty years ago. She hopped up and down a few times before she stopped, suddenly.

“Maybe, though, lounging wouldn’t be so bad today, hmm?”

With a delicate hand, she picked up her comb and ran it through her hair, listening to the silence that filled her bathroom. The leaky faucet that Ryuko never fixed dripped periodically into the sink and Mako stared at it as she absentmindedly brushed at her chestnut brown bob. She twirled her finger around one strand and set the brush down before sighing.

Crossing back into her bedroom, she glanced at her unmade bed and tugged at her shirt.

“I guess I can let you sleep just a little while longer.”

Mako went downstairs to prepare herself breakfast.

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There was an old record player in the corner of their living room that Ryuko had picked up off the street once. Mako suspected it was broken, but Ryuko insisted that if she just plugged it in, it would work fine. It didn’t. It spent nearly 3 months taking up space on one of the shelves in their entertainment center before Mako went crazy with spring cleaning and threatened to throw it out. Ryuko then took two weeks looking around for parts and reading up on manuals before it was fully repaired.

It was worth it. They wouldn’t have been able to afford their two bedroom in the city if it hadn’t been for the train line that ran not a block away. It rattled the entire neighborhood and

thundered through their house. Sleeping through it was no big deal, but during the day, it was nice to try to drown it over the sound of vinyl records playing from the living room.

It was playing loudly now and Mako swayed to the beat as she sang along.

“Tall and tan and young and lovely, the girl from Ipanema goes—hup!” Mako flipped a pancake in her pan and carried on. It was a shame that she’d never quite gotten the recipe of her mother’s croquettes down, but it didn’t stifle the rest of her culinary skills. Her tongue poked from between her lips as she leaned towards the pan and carefully drew the face of a bunny before filling the rest in with batter. She waited, happy to see that her pancake art skills were improving. The smell of it, too, rose throughout the house and she took a big inhale for herself.

“Oh, but I watch her sadly,” Mako sang. In the distance, she heard the train approaching. “How can I tell her I love her? Yes, I would give my heart gladly.”

The noise began to crescendo and the shaking started. Mako paused.

“Ryuko!” she shouted as the shuttering began to build. “You better be ready to go! I’m gonna eat all these pancakes to myself.”

The roar of the train and its horn cut through Frank Sinatra and the entire home. Underneath that thundering cry, Mako could swear she heard Ryuko laughing from upstairs. She grinned until the train zoomed past, taking with it all its noise and shaking.

The record didn’t skip through the clamor this time. It played on in the background. Tom Jobim crooned.

“Porque tudo é tão triste.”

And Frank Sinatra answered.

“Yes, I would give my heart gladly.”

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It was bright out and warm, too. Mako had put on a pair of shorts and a loose fitting, sleeveless top that stuck to her abdomen as a breeze caught the fabric and she happily jogged up the hilly pavement. She gave a twirl at the top, letting the sun warm her face, before letting out a puff of air, a small laugh. Pausing, she looked at her crossroads; she pouted her lips and turned her head, confused for a moment.

“I think it’s arou—ah hah! This way! C’mon Ryuko!”

She spun down one street and up another, humming something she might have heard once upon a time. Or maybe she made it up as she went along, hands clasped behind her back.

Either way, she sang something that just seemed to stem from the happiness inside of her and put a slight bounce in her step.

The ice cream shop was empty save for one elderly fellow behind the counter. The crow's feet around his eyes were deep and curved down to his cheekbones and his bushy white eyebrows seemed to dance as he smiled in greeting. He wore a blue bandana tied across his forehead and held an ice cream scooper as if it were knife and he was a sushi chef behind the bar.

"Hot day, huh, young lady?"

"Oh stop," Mako blushed. "I'm not so young anymore."

An old calico cat leapt on top of the counter. The man made a sound at the front of his mouth and eyed the cat, but Mako happily pet it. One of its eyes was sewn shut, but it purred as she ran her fingers under its chin. She brought her face to it.

"Hello cutie. You remind me of a friend somebody I love used to know."

"Ah, don't pay him any mind," the man said. "What can I get ya?"

"A sundae for me! And ah—Ryuko will have a cone of mint chocolate chip, please," Mako answered, still petting the friendly cat who regarded her with his one eye in mild amusement. He pawed at her, but missed as she moved about, teasing the poor cat with his lack of depth perception. She heard a cough.

"And a cone?" the man asked, scratching at his headband.

"Please and thanks, sir!"

Mako went back to petting the cat, humming happily to it as the man worked. She put an extra tip in his jar before she left, skipping down the road a ways before she found a bench. The bench. Her bench.

"It's been a while since we've had time to do this, huh, Ryuko? Oh damn, I should've gotten napkins," Mako said, settling in. The bench overlooked the city and lacked shade, but it was relatively peaceful to sit in. "You know how busy I get these days."

A truck blared its horn as it barreled past, causing Mako to startle, knocking the mint chocolate chip cone down into the pavement. She let out a groan.

"I guess we can share. I did eat all those pancakes this morning." She paused, spoon poised to dig in. "I'm so glad you kissed me here, all those years ago."

A motorbike revved its engine, but Mako could catch the pleased hum in Ryuko's timber through it.

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“Two tickets please!”

Thursday at the theatre down the street always had themes. It was the kind of theater that had perpetually sticky floors and no working popcorn machine, but patrons always snuck in snacks of their own. In the middle of the workday, the only people who came to shows were either delinquent high school students skipping class or older folks, retired and seeking refuge from the high afternoon sun. Mako felt happy being in between the two.

This Thursday was all old monster movies, a genre that was more for Ryuko than for Mako—not that she minded monster movies. In the middle of the day, they played all the classics, black and white, original Godzilla and all that. Mako took out snack after snack from the pocket of her shorts before she sat down; the theatre darkened immediately and the sound of rolling film filled the space.

“The last time I saw this, I was with you,” Mako whispered. She shifted in her seat and tilted her head up—two teenagers a few rows down and to her left and an old man way behind her in the back were the only other people in the theatre. She didn’t feel bad, but she kept her voice low. “Buncha things have changed since then!”

The movie played and Mako fell silent, watching, eating through her snacks. She laughed appropriately but mostly just watched. The two teenagers in the front started kissing not even halfway through.

“Look at them,” Mako muttered happily. “Remember when we used to do that?! You hated it—you just wanted to watch the movie, is what you said. But I found out the truth! Ryuko, you big flustered baby with a one track mind!”

The old man in the back shushed her. Mako covered her mouth and stifled a laugh, shifting down in her seat, and putting her feet up on the back of the seat in front of her.

“You always get me in trouble,” she said. She didn’t say anything else throughout the rest of the movie and tried not to fall asleep through it, but she didn’t want to sit up. Her eyes fluttered, mimicking the way old film skids on the screen. Godzilla rising from the shore one second, Godzilla setting fire to the city the next, a lot of army men talking right after that—Mako’s head slumped forward and she startled, trying to stay awake, but she felt a pressure on her shoulder, something comforting and warm, and gave up to sleep.

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“Neh! I’m sorry I fell asleep during the movie, Ryuko—but dinner will make up for it!”

Mako burst through the front door of the apartment and let her grocery bags fall across the kitchen counter before making her way over to that old turntable. She thumbed through the sleeves before putting on something old, nostalgic.

“Oh, and your sister’s coming over. I think I told you? It might have slipped my mind, but I’m sure you knew,” she said, before slipping on an apron. Mako was a hurricane in the kitchen and every bit of focus went into preparation. She needed no assistance, just space, and though she made a mess, everything somehow always came together. She just seemed to have a natural intuition for cooking and she was always happy to share her skills, but multitasking was not something she’d gotten the hang of over the years. Not everything could be changed, so it seemed.

“Your sister’s been really busy these days, too, you know,” Mako said, conversationally, once she’d brought one pot to a simmer to let it finish. Almost done, now. “I think she misses you a lot, too. But you know her, never one to say anything about it because she doesn’t want to come off as something or another—never got over that bit of high school insecurity, that one.”

Mako dipped a finger into the pot to taste test.

“I still got it!” She heard a key slide into the lock of her front door. “It was nice to spend today with you, you know. It’s nice to make time and take a day off of work.”

“Mako?”

“Hello, Satsuki-sama!” Mako greeted cheerfully. She turned the stove off then untied her apron. “Long time, no see stranger!”

“Apologies,” Satsuki said, shrugging off her jacket. “Who were you talking to?”

Mako turned a shade of red and scratched the back of her neck.

“Oh, you know. Your sister, and all.”

Satsuki paused, then lifted her hand and placed it on Mako’s shoulder, smiling sadly.

“I see,” she replied. She looked up at the stove. “Am I just in time?”

“As always!”

Mako went back to the kitchen and produced a small bowl from the cupboard. She loaded it with rice and bit of the stir-fry from the pot before going back to the living room. Satsuki had turned off the record player and took the bowl when Mako offered it to her. Mako skipped across the room, took a stick of incense, and lit it before placing it in front of the *butsudan* in the far corner. Satsuki set the bowl on its surface and Mako handed her one of two strikers once they’d knelt.

“Together?” Satsuki asked. Mako smiled and they struck the *rin gong* in unison before clasping their hands together.

The picture of Ryuko next to the *butsudan* was taken when she was older, red streak of hair still prominent and unruly as ever, smiling with all teeth, her canines shining white in the photo. Her grin seemed unfading and seemed to make all the background colors unfading. What Satsuki prayed for, Mako could only guess, but she was sure it was all good things.

Finishing up, Mako let out a sigh, and folded her hands in her lap. Enough time had passed that she did not need to cry. Every year she did the things they would have done together, and every year she could swear Ryuko was there. A gentle hand on her shoulder startled her, but Satsuki squeezed.

“Happy anniversary, Mako,” she said.

Mako smiled. “Thank you, Satsuki. Happy anniversary, Ryuko.”



## End Notes

\*blows kisses\* janewithawhy.tumblr.com - I write mostly satsuryu though, sorry.

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